

THE  
PRAISE  
OF  
HUMILITY.



A  
SERMON

PREACHED

Upon the 20th. of *March* 1687.

BEING

Palm-Sunday,

AT

The Guild-Hall-Chappel, London.

By JOHN TURNER Hospitaller of  
St. Thomas Southwark.

LONDON Printed, and are to be Sold by  
Randal Taylor near Stationers-Hall. 1687.

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UPON THE SUNDAY OF MARTIN LUTHER  
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The Guild-Hall-Church, London

By JOHN TOWNR, Minister of  
St. Thomas Southwark

LONDON Printed and sold by J. B. at the  
Royal Tavern in St. Dunstons Church, 1685

To the Right Honorable, and my  
 singular Good Lord, George  
 Lord Jeffries, Baron of Wem,  
 Lord High Chancellor of Eng-  
 land, and one of His Majesties  
 most Honorable Privy Coun-  
 cil, &c.

My Lord,

**T**His Sermon, which for the great seasonableness  
 of the Subject of it, I think it my Duty to Pub-  
 lish at this time, it being Preached, as it fell  
 out, but just the day before His Majesty was pleased to  
 signify His Gracious Resolution, to allow Liberty of Con-  
 science to all his loving Subjects of what Denomination  
 soever: I do humbly beseech your Lordship to Accept and  
 Patronize, as you do the Author; and give me leave at  
 once to pay a very small and inconsiderable Acknowledg-  
 ment for many the most signal and obliging Favors, and to  
 bestow so level, so useful, and so excellent a Virtue un-  
 der the shady Patronage of so great a Person, whose Name  
 and Authority, will at the same time render it more  
 charming to its Friends, and make it appear so formida-  
 ble to its Enemies, that it will constrain and force them  
 into its own resemblance, and cause them to Admire and  
 Humble themselves before it.

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

But besides the plain suitableness of the Discourse to the Juncture, Humility and Charity, being the only expedients that can make Liberty safe, or Toleration a tolerable thing, by preventing those Quarrels and Animosities that arise from different sentiments in Religious matters. Besides my own particular and personal Obligations, which I cannot think of without shame, when I consider how little I deserve them; there is also a Congruity in the Subject of my Sermon, to your Lordships Person, which seems to me to challenge and single you out for a Patron, without asking any leave but from the Nature of things, I mean those Natural effects of this incomparable Vertue which I have recommended, which flow so easily, so unaffectedly from you, with so much Beauty and Brightness, with so much Strength and Vigor, and with so constant and uninterrupted a Stream, in the sweetness and affability of your Conversation, even among your Inferiors and Dependants, in the easiness of Access in the midst of so much Greatness, the Quickness, the Justice, the Sagacity of dispatch in so important a crowd of Business, all which would be certain and infallible Indications at once of a Generous and Composed Mind, a Great and Lofly, and yet an Humble Spirit, though they were not, as they are, attended with a peculiar proneness to Forgive the most implacable and mortal Enemies, of which your Lordship hath given such convincing Proofs, that this alone might be sufficient, without that universal Merit, which even Envy and Detraction cannot help allowing you, to recommend you Powerfully to the Favor of a Prince, in whom Mercy is Hereditary, and Majesty is by Nature temper'd with Pity and Compassion, to render it more easie and familiar to his People: But there is likewise the Justice and Integrity, the Constancy and Courage, the Diligence and Assiduity, the Wisdom and the Conduct of your Actions, that have concurr'd



*curr'd and clu'd with a kind and obliging Temper, to render you truly Great, and make you an Object worthy the Esteem of two the most Judicious and Discerning Kings that ever sat upon the English Throne.*

*And, my Lord, it is another genuine Effect of that admirable Vertue which is the Glorious Theme of the ensuing Papers, that it makes its way to Greatness, as your Lordship hath done, not by Popularity and mischievous Intrigues, to the Danger, if not Ruin of the publick Peace, but only by just Actions and honorable Designs, and like your Great Master, whom Providence had a mind to shew how much it loved, by the Protection of a weakly Bark, when the Royal Oak was unable to defend Him, you Ventured, Suffered, and Escaped a Shipwreck, and made a costly Sacrifice of your Hopes and Fortunes to the publick Good, before your entrance upon that Scene of Honor in which you now shine, with so much the greater Brightness, for having first suffered so Glorious an Eclipse; by this means shewing at once, the difference betwixt your Enemies and you, and verifying our Saviours never failing Promise to all his Faithful Followers and Disciples, that whosoever Exalteth himself, by Base, Dishonorable, and Unworthy Means, the same shall be Abased, and he that Humbleth himself shall be Exalted.*

*For Humility, my Lord, is the true way to Greatness; it is not a Poltron and a sneaking Disposition, as its Name may seem unjustly to Insinuate; but it implies Magnanimity and Courage at the same time, by looking backward upon God, and inwards upon it Self, and forwards upon the Hope and Expectation of a future Life; it acquires an habitual Sense and Sympathy of Human Frailty, a Pity and Compassion for Human want and necessity, an universal Candor, Integrity and Ingenuity, in all its Words and Actions, and Designs, a warm inclination to promote the good of its Country, and the hap-*  
*piness*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

piness of Mankind, an admiration of God, and a desire to be like him, and a scorn of every thing that is unhand-some or unjust. It cannot revenge its own wrongs upon the Public, it cannot embarrass or embroil the World upon a principle of Private Interest; it cannot climb to Greatness upon the ruins of Justice, though it would never so fain, but it still meets with something that pulls it strongly back, and rewards all Ambition with regret and pain, but what is noble, and useful, and serviceable to the World, and is an Instinct of the Divinity in Human Nature, to prompt it, when fair Opportunities present themselves, to great Atchievements and generous Undertakings; it Ascends by the Steps of Chancery into the Temple of Honor, and from the Pinnacle of that lofty Structure, it Surveys the whole Extent and Circumference of things; and will not fall down to Worship a mean design, to Purchase all the Prospect that it Views.

But, my Lord, I grow troublesome with too much length; and therefore if what I have said, may not be allow'd to be Apology sufficient, for the hardiness of this Address, I shall only beg, that what I cannot Justifie, you would please to Pardon; and with my Prayers to God for your Lordships Health and Happiness, and encrease of Honor. I am, may it it please your Lordship,

Tour Lordships most Humble.

Grateful, and Obedient Servant.

John Turner.

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The Collect for Palm-Sunday.

**A**lmighty and Everlasting God,  
who of thy tender Love towards  
Mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Savi-  
our Jesus Christ, to take upon him our  
Flesh, and to suffer Death upon the Cross,  
that all Mankind should follow the Ex-  
ample of his great Humility; Mercifully grant that we may both follow the  
Example of his Patience, and also be  
made partakers of his Resurrection,  
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Matth.

I have been thinking of you  
 and wondering how you are getting on.  
 I hope you are well and happy.  
 I have been very busy lately,  
 but I have not forgotten you.  
 I have been thinking of you  
 and wondering how you are getting on.  
 I hope you are well and happy.  
 I have been very busy lately,  
 but I have not forgotten you.

## Matth. 5. 3.

*Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs  
is the Kingdom of Heaven.*



IN this and the two following Chapters, which contain our Saviours admirable Sermon upon the Mount, to his Disciples, there is drawn, as it were in little, the lively Portraiture of a Christian Man in all his Conversion, so that if we could once prevail upon our selves, frail and disobedient Creatures as we are, to live up to the height and perfection of those Rules, which are here prescribed and laid down, there could be nothing wanting to make us absolutely and compleatly happy, both in Body and Soul. For if we Survey this whole Discourse, tho but with a careless and superficial Eye, yet it will be easie to perceive, at first sight, that it is exactly Calculated, for the happiness of Mankind, to render us the most pleasant and contented within our selves, the most secure

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from any fear and danger from without, and to procure us the mutual Favor and Assistance of each other, in all our honest designs and undertakings.

To demonstrate this in all the several instances, so plainly, and so particularly as it might, and as it ought to be done, the more effectually to shew the manifest usefulness and tendency of them all, to ennoble and improve our Natures, and to make us as Wise, as Healthful, and as Happy, as we are severally capable of being, is not the business of a single Sermon, but of a large, Elaborate and Comprehensive Volume, wherein Religion and Philosophy may have room enough to stretch themselves at length, and appear in their full Magnitude and Just Proportion; therefore I shall content my self at present, without launching out into so large a Field, where every new Fruit and Flower will afford us a plentiful Entertainment by it self; to confine my self within a much narrower compass, by devoting my whole Discourse to the consideration of one Subject, and laying the single Charms of Humility before you: Humility, that Vertue which we so much want, Humility the Queen of Heaven and Earth, the fair and Majestick Sovereign



vereign of all Christian Graces, to which the first Beatitude was deservedly vouchsafed, to which as being the Corner-stone of Wisdom, the Bottom and Foundation of all other Virtuous and Goodly dispositions of Mind, the promise of both Worlds is annex't as it's reward, *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, saith our Saviour, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven;* and then again, *v. 5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.* That is, Humility is such a disposition of Mind, as is naturally fitted to give us the truest enjoyment of this Life, and to prepare us the most effectually for that which is to come. It consists in having a sober and modest Opinion of our selves, and in this it is opposed to that Arrogant and Swelling Humor which is a manifest detraction from all those Virtues or Excellencies whatsoever they be, which it pretends to vaunt it self upon. It is likewise accompanied with such a kind and charitable Opinion of others, as hath a natural tendency to make all the World our Friends; and it hath this peculiar Excellency in it, that it throws a Veil which no Man will be forward or desirous to uncover, over all the Frailties, Infirmities, or Imperfections of Men, and to all their Accomplish-

ments, Endowments, and Perfections, it gives an additional Brightness and Lustre, it makes them appear more Shining, and more Charming, more Beautiful and Lovely, more Inviting and Attracting, more worthy of Praise, because they do not affect it, more apt to be discovered and laid open with advantage to the publick View, and to the light of the World, because they do not offer and obtrude themselves upon it, with a prostitute Sollicitation, but with a Virgin Modesty and Shame, they strive to withdraw and to conceal themselves; and thus it is true likewise in the course of Nature, as well as in that of Providence, that *God resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble*, that is, that Pride is a natural Obstruction to it self, but Humility hath natural Charms to recommend it. It does, with respect to our selves, what Love and Charity are said to do with reference to others, it covers a multitude of Frailties and Offences, and if there be any thing Excellent or Praiseworthy in us, it sets it off with a new accession of Beauty and Advantage.

Humility is such a disposition of Mind, whose very Nature consists in a certain pleasant Calmness and Serenity of Spirit, which  
is

is the best fitted to enjoy it self, without which no Moral Vertue or Christian Grace can have it's perfect work in our Hearts, but it will be ruffled and discomposed by the disorder of Passions, and the uneasie turbulence of immoderate desires. It is the proper temper and constitution of a Wise Man, who being still and quiet, and sedate within himself, is the better enabled to make a true judgment and a right advantage of all other things and persons round about him. It is such a Vertue, that as it is the best way to advance us, and to bring us to a Flourishing and Prosperous condition, so it makes that Prosperity safe and unenvy'd, it carries along with it the good Wishes and Prayers of all we converse with, and all that have any knowledge of us, that it may continue; and if any affliction or calamity happen to overtake us, it will be sure to supply us with Pity and Relief from without, and within it will furnish us with Patience and Submission to the Will of God, which are a comparative Remedy to the worst of Evils. It is the most certain and unquestionable expedient of the utmost happiness in this Life; and it is not only a condition of, but also a necessary preparation to the Enjoyment and Glory of the other.

But

6      *The Praise of Humility.*

But on the contrary, if instead of this, instead of enjoying Meekness and Poverty of Spirit, which is indeed the only true Greatness and Magnanimity of it; our Saviour had taught his Disciples after another manner, be ye *Insolent* and *Proud*, be ye *Haughty* and *Assuming*, *Arrogant* and *Overweening*, *Vaunters* of your selves, and *Despisers* of others; I need not say what Horrid, what Dismal, what Deplorable Effects the universal practice of such a Doctrin as this would have brought upon the World; it would have Unhinged the whole Frame and Order of things, and turned the World again into a *Chaos* more confused than that out of which by the kind and harmonious disposition of the Divine Nature it was at first produced; and if to so Destructive, so Baneful, so Pernicious a Temper, he had annexed the same promise which he hath done to Meekness, for *they* that are thus affected *shall Inherit the Earth*, it would have been a plain sign, he did not understand the natural consequence of his own Doctrin, which can have no other possible issue or result where it is universally practiced, but only to bring the World into confusion, to chase it with perpetual Strife, Animosity and Contention,

tention, to involve it in Blood, and Misery, and Slaughter, and to make Mankind a mutual and an eternal Plague and Punishment to each other.

Or if he had made it a condition of obtaining an Inheritance in the World to come, or had prescribed it, as a preparative to the enjoyment of it, we must either have concluded him to have been the vilest of Impostors, instead of being as he is, the Saviour of the World, and the Redeemer of Mankind, from Misery as well as Sin; or we must have looked upon God Almighty, whose Messenger he was, under the notion of an angry and revengeful Being, that delighted in nothing more, than in the Misery and Torment of his Creatures; for Heaven at this rate would have been so far from being worth accepting, being an Eternal State of mutual Pride, Animosity and Contention, that but to think of coming thither, would be a degree of Damnation, even in this Life, and a Torment too great for Humane Nature to bear.

But if we understand any thing of the condition of those Blessed Spirits, that are made partakers of the Heavenly Kingdom, and of the Life and Glory that shall be revealed

ed, it is without all question, or else it cannot be an happy State, a State of mutual Benevolence and Goodwill, it consists in an Eternal Friendship, which cannot be supposed in so great equality of Happiness and Glory, and in so great and universal longing after closer and more intimate Communion with God, such breathing and contention after the enjoyment of him, without a mutual yielding and condescension; it is founded in an humble and modest Opinion of themselves, in a kind and charitable disposition towards their Neighbors, the Partners and fellowpartakers of the same Light and Immortality with themselves, in a perfect resignation to the Divine Will, and in a magnificent Esteem and veneration of his Nature; and our Saviour by making such habits and dispositions of Mind, to be the indispensable conditions of being his Disciples, by placing all the instances of Obedience in such things as are so manifestly for the comfort and support of Humane Life; and are withal so necessary and so natural a preparation to the Happiness of the future State, hath given as great, if not a much greater Testimony to the truth of his Doctrine, the Divinity of his Person, and the un-



unquestionable Authority of his Mission from above, than any the greatest of his Miracles, without so useful and so highly reasonable a Doctrine could have afforded.

I said just now that Humility was the very Corner-stone of Wisdom, the Bottom and Foundation of all manner of Vertue, but upon second Thoughts I recall my self, it is not so much the *Foundation* of Vertue as the *Complexion* of it, it comprehends *all* Vertue and Wisdom within it self. For Vertue is nothing else but practical Wisdom, and Humility is Patience, Humility is Temperance, Humility is Justice, Humility is Chastity, Humility is Prudence, Humility is Obedience, Humility is Charity, Humility is Brotherly-kindness, putting on several Appearances and Shapes that have a disagreeing likeness to each other, like Brothers and Sisters, or the nearest Kindred of the same House and Line, that have a resemblance and a difference at the same time.

— *Facies non omnibus una;  
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse Sororum.*

For all these are founded where they are not practiced by *instinct* or by *habit*,  
C which

which two are but *animal* and brutish things, even in those Actions that have a vertuous Appearance, I say, all these are founded, where ever they are exercised upon inducements of Reason, which are the only things that constitute the Essence of Vertue in any particular instance that can happen; they are founded in a due sense of the infirmity of Human Nature; For all these are necessary upon no other account, but either that single Persons cannot be happy, or else that Society cannot subsist without them; the former of which is manifestly the case of Chastity, Temperance and Patience, the latter more remotely of Charity, Brotherly-kindness and Prudence, without which a Society cannot so well subsist; more immediately of Obedience and Justice, without which it cannot possibly subsist at all; so that all these Vertues have the consideration of Human Frailty for their Object, and the redressing of it for their end; and this is no other than what we call *Humility*, it is a wise and a just Sense of the frailty and infirmity to which Human Nature is subject, so that when we speak of Humility, we speak of every thing that is either truly useful or truly ornamental; it is the Philo-

sophi-

lofophical *Elixir* that converts every thing it touches into Gold; it is the natural and the politic *Archæus* that makes and governs the Vital Spirits of Action, that sweetens and pacifies the disagreeing Humors both of the natural and the civil Body; it is that Universal Remedy of Human Life, to which, when we mean it of any thing but this, none but very *Empiricks* and Mountebanks in *Physick* are so hardy to pretend; it is Milk and Honey purchas'd by sound Wisdom and comprehensive Judgment without Money and without Price, it is *Health to the Navil and Marrow to the Bones*, it is *Corn, Wine and Oyl*, with all their good effects of a *strong Body*, a *shining Countenance*, and a *joyful Heart*. *We have seen thy goings, O God, we have all seen how thou our God and King goest in the Sanctuary, the Singers go before, the Minstrels follow after, in the midst are the Damsels playing with the Timbrels*: Humility leads up the Dance of Vertue, and Charity concludes it, and in the midst are Peace and Mercy joining hands together, Righteousness, Temperance, Obedience, Patience, Magnanimity and Prudence, Inviting, Kissing and Embracing each other.

Humility, thou *meek & lowly*, and yet at once

*infinite and exalted Vertue ! thou comprehensive, incomprehensible thing ! thou that conquereſt by Patience and ſubdueſt by Yielding! whereunto ſhall I liken thy divine Perfection ? or with what compariſon ſhall I compare thee ? Humility how lovely ? how amiable art thou ? thou art fairer than the Children of Men, ruddy, freſh and beautiful as the Morning Sky, All thy Garments ſmell of Myrrh, Aloes and Caſſia ; Full of Grace are thy Lips, becauſe the Lord hath bleſſed thee for ever.*

The ſource of Humility is not ſo obſcure as that of Nile is ſaid to be, but yet it is more impervious and inacceſſible than the other, not but that it diſcovers a great deal of it ſelf, but that it hides much more, for the Fountain of Humility is God himſelf.

× It is a thing very agreeable to the Reaſon and reſtleſs Curioſity of Mankind, what we find practiced, even by inquiſitive Children, to be taking things in pieces to ſee what they are made of, and finding it ſelf ſurrounded by ſuch a Magnificent Scene, contrived after ſo uſeful and ſo excellent a manner, adorn'd and *variegated* with ſuch an infinity of beautiful and ſurprizing Objects, to be enquiring into the contexture of the Work it ſelf, and into the maker of it,

it, and from it self to ascend higher in the Scale of Causes, to the Original and Fountain of its Being, which is that which we use to call by the name of God, in which as being the first, the most eminent and most transcendent Cause, it discerns so much Excellence, so vast, unbounded and unlimited Perfection, that though there be enough and to spare of other things, that may be sufficient to abase and humble wise Men, as the narrowness of our knowledge when it is, the most improved, the dulness and inactivity of our Minds when they are the most attentive and erect, the scantiness of our Memories when they are the most comprehensive, the shortness of our Lives at the utmost extremity of that which we call Old Age, the craziness of those Bodies which we carry about us when they are at the strongest, the Diseases and casualties to which they are exposed, the uncertainty of our Fortunes when they are at the highest, the satiating nature and quality of our Enjoyments when they continue firm and constant to us, as we before experiment would have wish'd and pray'd they might be, the fickleness of Friendship, the mutability of Interest, the decays of Youth and Beauty, the dependency and obnoxious-

noxiousness of all Earthly Things; yet these are but small diminutions of our selves, they create but a low degree of Humility and Abhorrence in us, in comparison of what unavoidably results from the consideration of God and his infinite Perfection, his immense Power, his incomprehensible Wisdom, his never failing Goodness, his impartial and unbiass'd Justice, his manifest and yet *mysterious* Omnipresence; then we loath and abhor our selves in Dust and Ashes, we are fill'd with a fastidious Aversion and Dislike, we vanish away in Smoak, we shrink and shrivel into nothing, we are not so much as a drop to the *Atlantique*, as an *Atome* to the Body of the Sun, or to the whole circumference of *liquid æther*, in which he performs his daily and yearly Motion; we are *metamorphos'd* out of Men to Worms, and out of Worms we are transform'd to Insects, and when we consider *the Heavens, the work of his Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which he hath ordained*, it is natural for us to cry out with the *Royal Poet*, who in this was not guilty of Poetique Licence, *Lord, what is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou hast regard unto him?*

We may consider this Universe under the  
notion



notion of an inverted *Pyramid*, of which the humble Man is the terminating Point and the divine Perfections, are the inverted *Basis*, and the Lines that are drawn between these two from the bottom to the top, grow still more wide and distant from each other, as they ascend higher in their Progress to the top, so that the humble Mans Contemplations begin at himself, and from himself they ascend upward thorough all the several Orders of created Beings, till he comes to the great Source and Original of all things, wherein all their several Beauties and Perfections are *transcendently* contained, and still the higher he goes the more humble he is, because he discerns the more, upon a just comparison, the littleness of himself; but in the divine Nature he is swallowed up with astonishment and wonder, there is so vast and infinite a Prospect before him; he is like a small crany to a vast Circumference, though the one may be seen and observed through the other, and he discovers the divine Attributes full of excellence and brightness, and is ravish'd with the Sense and Contemplation of them, though he cannot see God *as he is* in himself, in his true Latitude and just Extent, like the Image of some large  
and

and spacious Object, contracted into Minia-  
ture, in which all the Parts and Lineaments  
appear, but not in their natural and true  
dimensions. And still the more he Con-  
templates, the Wiser he grows, and the more  
he Despiseth himself in comparifon of that  
Excellence he converses with, the nigher he  
approaches in perfection to it.

But with the Proud Man it is clean other-  
wise; it is true, he begins with himself as  
well as the other, but then he ends in him-  
self too, his prospect is not upwards towards  
Heaven, but downwards towards the Earth,  
and he fits at the top of that short inverted  
*Pyramid* of which himself is the *Basis*, and the  
broadest part, so that he converses with no-  
thing but what is either less than himself,  
or what he imagins to be so; for no Man  
certainly can be Proud of the Comparison,  
when he thinks himself Conversant with a  
Nobler Object, so that it is exactly true of  
the Proud, Haughty and Assuming Man,  
what *David* saith in general of the Wicked,  
that *he hatb not God in all his thoughts*, and  
that though Pride and Ignorance be not con-  
vertible terms, for a Man may be Ignorant  
that is not Proud, yet Pride is certainly no-  
thing else but an effect of Ignorance, of want  
of

of Consideration, want of Skill and Judgment in the true Rate and Value of things.

Again, It is not only true that this admirable Grace and Vertue of Humility, hath its firmest Root, and it's most powerful Cause in the contemplation of the Divine Nature, which is the most excellent Object we can converse with, but the *Psalmist* tells us expressly, speaking of God himself, that *he Humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth. From the rising of the Sun, saith he, unto the going down of the same, the Lords Name is to be Praised, the Lord is high above a'l Nations, and his Glory above the Heavens, who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on High, and yet Humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth?* Not that God who is the *First mover* and the only *Supream* and *Self-existent* Nature, can in propriety be said to be an *Humble* or an *Abject* being, but that he is invested in a most eminent manner, with all those gentle inclinations to Pity and Compassion, which are the Natural consequents of Humility among Men, he is *kind* and *gracious*, *slow to anger* and *easy to be entreated*, and *his Mercy is over all his works*, his *Power* is allay'd and tempered by his *Goodness*, and his *Justice* is blended by

his *Mercy*, and his great *Mind* is thoughtful with the Cares of the Universe, which is his *perpetual Charge*, and a *Charge* which cannot be managed by an *Affected* and *Proud*, which is a disturbance to it self, and would hinder the due administration of so vast a Government, but by a *Sedate*, *Quiet* and *Serene* Mind, which is not more requisite to the Government of the World, than to the happynefs of the Governor himself, who in order to his being infinitely perfect, as he certainly is, as being the cause of all things, and containing all Created Perfection within himself, must in the First place be supposed to be necessarily Existent, for Existence is the root of all other Perfections, and in the next, to be infinitely Happy and perfectly at Ease, for where there is no Happynefs, there is no Enjoyment, and where there is perfect Happynefs, there must be perfect Peace; and if God were not the most perfectly Happy, he must be the most Miserable and Unhappy Being, because it is true of him, what the inspired writer to the *Hebrews* tells us of *Melchizedek*, that he is, *without Father, without Mother, without Descent or Genealogy, he hath neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life*, but must pass for ever Miserable thorough a  
linger-

lingering Eternity, and can do all things but die.

But besides this, there are four things that discover the Nature of God in this sense to be *Humble*, that it is an *Equal*, an *Impassible* thing, and that it is never disturbed out of it's true Poise and Balance by any event whatsoever.

First, There is the Universe which is not only so regularly Govern'd, as I have said before, but so exactly, so admirably contrived, which speaks not only a very wise and knowing, but a very cool, considerate and quiet Artist.

Secondly, All Pride and Arrogance proceeding out of Ignorance, this cannot be competible to that perfect Nature which is acknowledged to be infinitely Wise.

Thirdly, If we examin the state of things among Men, they are comparisons upon the *Level* that usually make us Proud, for the consideration of things that are above us is naturally fitted to debase and humble our Minds, and when we reflect either upon Beasts or Flies, upon Creatures of no understanding, or Creatures of no moment, we disdain to come into the comparison with

them, neither do we look upon it as any commendation, it makes no manner of change or alteration in our Visage, or deportment, to be thought by others, or to think our selves more excellent and valuable than such things as these. But it is then we begin to *think more highly of our selves than we ought to think*, when we compare our selves with one another, wherefore God being placed at such an infinite distance above the Highest and Noblest of his Creatures, and there being nothing in them which is not in himself, the emanations of whose Power and Goodness they are, he cannot certainly be capable of such a passion as this, upon any account of equality or Emulation, neither can he value himself upon a Comparison, though with the first born of all the Angels of Light.

Fourthly, *Novelty* and *Unaccustomedness* is another cause of Pride, Men are commonly Proud of things they are not used to, but they that are born to great things, or have been long accustomed to them, Greatness sits lightly and easily upon them, and they have an Air of Complaisance and Humility, in the midst of that Fortune which an upstart cannot bear without contemning  
and



and trampling upon others, and what becomes easie by *Custom* in the Gifts of Fortune, does so by *Consideration* in those of the Mind, they are not accompany'd in considering Men with a bloty and a puffy Humor, but with Humility and Affability they recommend themselves, and shun the two equally dangerous and pernicious Rocks of Hatred and of Envy; and therefore in God who was infinitely Perfect and Happy in himself from all Eternity, his Perfection was always so easie and familiar to him, that as he cannot think too well of himself, so he does it not with any contempt of his Creatures that are infinitely below him, but only with a just, wise, and considerate approbation of his own Adorable and Immortal Being. So that here is another excellence of Humility; that it hath not only its root and spring in God, but that it is also in some sort a breathing after his Likeness, an imitation of his Perfections, and a participation of his Nature, which may be the reason why the influences of Divine Grace, do so *willingly* descend upon the Humble Man, because there is a *congruity* between them, they have a *resemblance* and *likeness* to one another, and God delights to dwell in such a Mind, as is

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so true an Image of himself, and represents the candor, equability and constancy, of his unshaken, peaceable and quiet Essence, and this makes it true in a Spiritual, as well as in a Natural sense, that *God resisteth the Proud, but giveth grace to the Humble*: Neither is it any wonder to find in the Sermon on the Mount, that the *Kingdom of Heaven* is promised to the *Poor in Spirit*, when it appears to be so *Godlike*, and so *Heavenly* a disposition, for that which we call *Humility* in Men, is almost the same constitution of Mind, to which the happiness of the Divinity it self is owing, that is, the *Equability*, *Ingenuity*, and *Quietness* of his Nature.

The Power and Justice of God are only terrible and frightful to consider; we shrink and tremble at them with horror and amazement, for fear of Thunderbolts, and Hurricanes, and Earthquakes, for fear the Sea should break it's wonted Banks, and Heaven descend in Hailstones and Coles of Fire; for fear of Plagues and Famins, and other *Epidemical* Evils, knowing, as we do, how much he can inflict, and being sensible how much we have deserved; but 'tis his Goodness only that excites our Love, that enflames and stimulates our Zeal, that *harmo-*  
*nizes*

nizes and sweetens our Devotion, that takes our Harps design from off the *Willowes* in the midst of all these Melancholy thoughts, and makes them joyn in consort with *Anthems* of Praise. And what is true of God the Governor of all things, is true in its proportion of Kings too, and their Subordinate Magistrates and Ministers; their Power when it is not temper'd with Sweetness and Benignity, may indeed extort and force Obedience from us, but it creates Hatred and Aversion at the same time; but when we discover a stroke of Goodness, a Pity in the midst of Punishment, a sense and *sympathy* of Humane Frailty, in the midst of the Severities they inflict upon us, we do not say then as *Jacob* did to *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce; and their Wrath, for it was cruel*, but we Kiss and Embrace the kind and unwilling Rod, and praise it at the same instant, when we are smarting under it: And as this blessed, this even temper of Mind recommends even God himself, and his Vicegerents to their Subjects, so it recommends their Subjects back again to them, and returns with new Charters, new Priviledges, new and encreast influences of Divine Favor, and of Royal Goodness. Therefore let us  
Pray

Pray for Humility, that Humility may Pray and Intercede for us, both with our God, and with our King.

× There is nothing more certain in experience, than that if two Men be equally Rich, equally Noble, and in equal Place and Dignity in the State, and if the temper of the one be Humble, Affable and Kind, that of the other Severe, Morose, Implacable, Proud and Haughty, that the one of these shall be Reverenc'd and Esteem'd, the other Despised by some, and Hated by all; and since Riches are of no other use, after the necessities of Nature are supplied, than to procure us Power, Interest and Esteem among Men, it is manifest in this case, tho' in an equality of Substance, of Land and Money, of Goods and Chattels, of Birth and Fortune, that still, he that hath the greater Authority, is in truth and reality the Richer Man, so that this Humility, this *Poverty* of Spirit, is when all is done, the *truest*, and the *most valuable Riches*.

And as in the case of *Riches*, so also in that of *Learning* or *Knowledge*; if we suppose two Men equally learned, equally knowing; with this diversity of temper between them, the consequence of this will be, in a mutual

excellence on both sides, that the one shall be admir'd and prais'd, respected and lov'd, follow'd, and pointed at, and crowded after, but the other scarce ever taken notice of, or regarded, to his infinite trouble and vexation; for this is the fate of Insolence and Pride, that it is sure to be affronted and contemn'd, and yet there is nothing that is so uneasie under it, or that bears it with greater Impatience and Resentment. Though after all, since the use of Learning is twofold, First, To instruct and ennoble a Mans self, and Secondly, To make him capable of instructing others, and of being a public Blessing where he lives: The Second of these Uses, which is certainly the best and noblest, is lost in the Arrogant and Assuming Man, for Men had rather be Ignorant, than be *Magisterially* taught, or be imposed upon even by Truth it self, commanding a Reverence, not for it's own sake, by gentle and insinuating perswasion, but upon account of the *Brows* and *Forehead* of its Teacher; so that after all, if we respect the true use of Learning, though there be an equal extent of knowledge on both sides, yet the Humble only is the truly, the usefully, the beneficially knowing Man.

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But I speak this only upon supposition, that there can be such a thing as a very Proud and a very knowing person, at the same time, a thing which I can very hardly induce my self to believe; for Humility is a temper that naturally leads to Knowledge by consideration, and Coolness, by industry and patience by not only enduring, but loving, with reason, to be opposed and contradicted, by correcting its mistakes and errors every Day, as *Astrologers* do their Nativities, by new thoughts, new occurrences, and new events. Humility insinuates it self by slow and gentle, but sure and steady Progressions, into the deepest *Mysteries* of Art and Nature; Humility climbs up to Heaven, and brings Heaven down by Telescopes to it self, and makes the Stars fall down before it, like the *Angels of God*, ascending and descending upon *Jacobs Ladder*, and that not in a *Vision* as it was with him, but in some sort of *reality* and *truth*. But Pride is impatient, and makes too great haste to be Wise, it takes up prejudices and will not forsake them, it disdains to be mistaken, and therefore will not relinquish its Errors, it is impatient of contradiction, and therefore cannot be instructed; it Vaunts  
and

and Magnifies it self as having run through the whole course of Truth, when it hath scarce performed the nearest Stage of that long, wearisome and laborious Journey, and that too with a very precipitant and hasty motion, for the *Proverb* holds good in enquiries after Truth, that *the farthest way about is the nearest way home*, and that a cool, humble, considerate, sober pace, will with the greatest speed, and with the most certain and assured safety, conduct the Traveller to his Journeys end.

✕ Of the truth of this, we have had a notorious instance in experience in this last Age of ours; in the late Famous and Ingenious Author of the *Leviathan*, I mean, who as appears by some of his Performances, was a Person qualifi'd by Nature for extraordinary things, had they not been unhappily prevented by the Pride and Haughtiness of his temper, he was got, it shou'd seem, into the *Dogmatical* Humor, and was impatient of Contradiction from others, though full of the Spirit of Contradiction himself, he was resolved to be the Founder of a new Sect that should be called after his Name, as there are but too many of his Disciples to be met



with, and he would needs be the Author and Inventer of new Notions and of new *Hypotheses*, whither the Nature of things would bear them or no; and from hence it came to pass, that he became so blind, that he could not see the Sun at Noon-day; he could not discover, the existence of a God; neither did he take the consideration of him into the *System* of his *Politics*, by which the main Pillar of Obligation was destroyed; he was used to say, that the Laws of every Nation, were the *only* Law and Gospel when all was done, and yet by his Principles he could at any time dispence not only with Positive Laws, but with the Natural too, which are of Moral, Unalterable and Eternal Force; so that according to him, there is no standing Nature of things, no principle of Conscience, or of Obligation; and what a vast absurdity in *Politics* this Doctrin is, what Misery and Confusion it would introduce among Men, whereever it is heartily Believed and Practiced; a blinder Man then Mr. *Hobs* himself, though he was blind enough, may easily discern: In his Natural Philosophy he hath been Unanswerably confuted and exposed by several learned Men, and in his *Mathematicks*

ticks too, so effectually taken to task, that it hath been demonstrated plainly, that he never was more mistaken, than when he himself pretended to Demonstration; and when he wrote his Book *Contra Fastum Geometrarum*, against the *Pride* and *Loftynefs* of the *Mathematicians*, he discovered his own *Pride* and *Ignorance* together; so necessary is *Humility* to *Knowledg*, so dangerous, nay so destructive to their design is it, for Men that would be *Learned*, to be *Proud*.

\* And if we Translate *Humility* from Arts and Sciences to matters of Religion; *Humility* though it do not *Anatbematize* and Thunder, is almost every whit as able to determine *Controversies*, as a *General Council*, and is as well qualified to preside in the *Divinity* Chair, as any University *Dictator* of them all; *Humility* is a sharp, inquisitive and discerning *Vertue*, and such as perswades the belief of what she teaches, by very strong Arguments, but by stronger temper; and Men are willing to give Ear to what she says, because they see plainly she hath no design upon them; but only for their good; they know her to be a very shrewd and learned *Vertue*, that she hath used great industry in her inquiries after  
Truth,

### 30 The Praise of Humility.

Truth, and that she speaks her Mind with all imaginable frankness and sincerity, and with a desire to scatter Knowledge and Happiness together, which things of themselves without much use of Argument, are a very fair step to Conviction.

But if she cannot bring all Men to be of a mind, or if her own Subjects, the Vassals and liege People of the humble Kingdom, which is I am afraid no larger than the Territory of some *Indian* Princes; if these themselves cannot all be united into one common Faith, yet Humility considers Wisely, that all Men have not, neither indeed can have, the same Capacity, the same Strength and Vivacity of Wit and Judgment, the same Opportunities, the same Education, the same Apprehensions, and the same notions of things, and therefore admits a difference without a disagreement. And this I am sure of, it would be a blessed change, if *Humility* could take the place, and do the Office of *Ecclesiastical censures*, so as to make them useless and needless for the future, and so put an end to those severities of Law, which, as all other punishments in other matters, can be justified by nothing, but only that they are ne-

necessary, because mad men run Opinion into Faction, and Faction into Riot and Rebellion. And I dread to think how thin and *depopulate* the Kingdom of Heaven will be, and the *Jerusalem* which is above, a City almost without Inhabitants, and a Kingdom without Subjects, notwithstanding all our pretences to Salvation, and our annexing it to this or that Communion, if none but the *Poor in Spirit* shall obtain it, if none but the *Humble* and the *Charitable Man* shall be Saved.

Humility would not only prove a blessed Instrument of *Ecclesiastical* peace, but also of *Civil* too, if it could but gain Credit and Reputation among us; for Humility never complains before it is hurt, nay, Humility for the sake, and for the good of her Country, rather than make a broil and a disturbance in it, can suffer her self to be hurt without complaining; she neither thinks, nor does, nor apprehends any ill; she is a Friend to all, and therefore thinks all to be a Friend to her; she sees no *Fantastic* and visionary Dangers, she is troubled with no imaginary Jealousies and Fears, she cannot discern Apparitions in the Air, nor Monsters in the Earth, nor Whales.

## 32 *The Praise of Humility.*

Whales portending calamities in the Water, but she puts her first Trust in God, and her next in the King, and she believes that all things will work together for good to them that walk like her, and do their duty. She neither pries into the Cabinets of Princes, nor censures the transactions of State, nor raises false Reports to create an ill Opinion of her Governors, in the People, neither doth she foment or encourage them when they are raised.

Humility resolves, let what will come to pass, to be quiet and submit, because she considers that the *Hand of the King*, is as the *Finger of God*, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him both in Heaven and Earth, by whom *Kings Reign and Princes decree Justice*. Humility is a peaceable and resigning Vertue, and wherever she hath a Temple in any English Breast, there the King hath a Faithful and Obedient Subject.

But that which makes most of all for the commendation of Humility is, that our blessed Saviour who was God incarnate, and who suffered so many indignities and reproaches from the worst of Men, who humbled himself even to the Death, the ignominious

nious and painful Death of the Cross, for our sakes, hath given us so great a pattern and example of it, *learn of me*, saith he, *for I am meek and lowly in Heart, and ye shall find rest unto your Souls.* And on this very day when he entred into *Jerusalem*, with Acclamations and *Hosanna's*; though the People mistook him for a Triumphant Prince, and thought their Victorious *Messias* was a coming, yet it was indeed no more then the Triumph of Humility, over the Scorn and Malice of his Enemies, it was but a Prologue to his approaching Crucifixion, which was in truth his last and greatest Conquest, wherein he Triumpht over Death and Hell; and so the Prophet *Zachary*, and out of him the *Evangelist St. Matthew* hath described the matter, *Rejoyce greatly, O Daughter of Zion; shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Ass, and upon a Colt, the foal of an Ass;* and if so great an Example as this, the Example of God putting on human Shape, almost on purpose, ~~that he might set a pattern of~~ Obedience and Humility to us, will not encourage and recommend the Practice of it, I

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34 *The Praise of Humility.*

know not what will, for I have nothing else to say, but that Humility is Humility, that is, that a Vertue so transcendently excellent and great, can be compared to nothing but it self.

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F I N I S.

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*ERATA.*

*Pag. 23. line 2. for design read down.*